

National Aeronautics and
Space Administration
Office of the Administrator
Washington, DC 20546-0001



March 6, 2003

Admiral Harold Gehman, USN (Ret)
Chairman
Columbia Action Investigation Board
16850 Saturn Lane
Houston, Texas 77058

Dear Admiral Gehman,

In furtherance of my response of February 28, 2003, this is to advise of our revised organizational structure to support the Columbia Accident Investigation Board.

We have divided our teams into three, each of which will match up with your Board's subdivisions. Each of the teams will be led by senior agency officials who were not involved in the Space Shuttle Program office during the Flight Readiness Review process, nor during the Columbia STS-107 mission. The Materials Team will be led by Jim Kennedy, who is the Deputy Director at Kennedy Space Center in Florida. The Operations Team will be led by Randy Stone, the Deputy Director at Johnson Space Center in Texas. The Technology Team will be led by Frank Benz, the Director of Engineering also at Johnson Space Center in Texas.

Additionally, this is to advise that we have begun informal planning efforts to prepare for 'return to flight' to be ready to implement the findings of the Columbia Accident Investigation Board. NASA's 'Return to Flight' analysis will also look across the entire Space Shuttle Program and evaluate improvements for safety and flight operations. Accordingly I am selecting Dr. Michael A. Greenfield, the Associate Deputy Administrator for Technical Programs, to head a Return to Flight team. The team will be composed of a number of key officials and safety professionals from within the space flight community. Their experience in shuttle operations and the investigation to date will provide a sound foundation for this critical activity.

I also want to express my personal thanks for the important work that you and your fellow board members are doing for NASA and this country. We are very appreciative of your cooperation and that of the Board as we work through these difficult issues. The courageous families of the Columbia astronauts are counting on us to find the problem, fix it and fly again.

Cordially,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sean O'Keefe".

Sean O'Keefe
Administrator